



**OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR
EVELYN SANGUINETTI**

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Lt. Governor Sanguinetti's opening statement at joint Rivers Coordinating Council meeting

SPRINGFIELD - Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti yesterday delivered the following remarks at her first meeting of the Illinois River Coordinating Council, the Mississippi River Coordinating Council and the Ohio and Wabash Rivers Coordinating Council:

"Good afternoon. I'd like to take a moment to welcome everyone to our first joint meeting of the Rivers Coordinating Council. It is truly an honor for me to serve as the Lt. Governor of the State of Illinois. I look forward to working closely with everyone in this room to support the economic and ecological interests of our waterways.

Over the last few months I have had the absolute privilege of traveling the state to meet with residents throughout Illinois. Our waterways and their importance to our Illinois quality of life and economy quickly became a theme of my travels.

In my first few weeks on the job, I visited the Quad Cities to meet with Colonel Deschenes of the US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island district to discuss wetland mitigation, habitat preservation, and Illinois' aging lock and dam infrastructure.

Soon thereafter, I found myself speaking with the Institute of Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University about Illinois coal, corn and soybean exports and the importance of WRDA.

Just this last Monday, I joined Senator Sue Rezin in LaSalle County to discuss flood plain and storm water management before again meeting with Colonel Deschenes at

Starved Rock to discuss the Illinois River Lock and Dam infrastructure, GLMRIS, Asian Carp... and I even got to see a Bald Eagle.

My experiences over this first quarter have solidified what I learned over the last few years – that our waterways provide Illinois a tremendous resource.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, 231 million tons of goods move through Illinois' waterways every year. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates Illinois' rivers help move over \$140 billion in goods and support 50,000 jobs annually.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources reports recreation and tourism play a big role in Illinois river towns by helping employ 143,000 people statewide and producing \$6.6 billion in revenue annually.

None of this would be possible without clean waterways. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, nutrient pollution is one of the top three causes of impairment of our nation's waters. Because of the work of many in this room and Lt. Governors before me, we are making progress in cleaning up Illinois waterways – but more can certainly be done.

While our mission is outlined in statute, as Chair of the Illinois River Coordinating Council, the Mississippi River Coordinating Council, and the Ohio and Wabash River Coordinating Council, I look forward to working with the members of each council to lay out a 2015 River and Watershed Integrated Management Strategy that protects our economic interests while preserving our environmental priorities.

In closing, I would again like to thank our river stakeholders and the members of our Rivers' Councils for joining us today.”